

# State Senator • Deb Cherry news 08/06



**For the Constituents of the 26th District**

## A Note From Senator Cherry

Dear Friends,

*The action in the State Senate has been heating up as the summer flies by. We've just wrapped up another challenging budget process and have also been hard at work on a number of other important projects.*

*Just as budgets are still tight for many Michigan families, our state government has been forced to do more with less. This makes it extremely challenging to provide funding for the many deserving services our state offers. As a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, and as Minority Vice-Chair of the Subcommittees on Higher Education and Community Health, I have worked very hard to ensure that we are able to protect programs important to our communities, our educational system, and our state's most vulnerable citizens. At the same time, we have been able to invest in initiatives that will help get our economy going again and make sure our workforce is trained for the good-paying jobs of tomorrow.*

*I have also been busy introducing and promoting legislation that will protect jobs and benefit cash-strapped consumers in our state. Making sure our tax dollars are not being used to ship jobs overseas, giving consumers more rights, and increasing the minimum wage are at the top of my legislative agenda.*

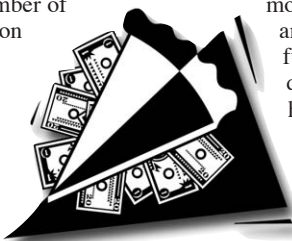
*I have been privileged to represent you in Lansing over the last four years. It is my belief that we can move our state forward and make Michigan a great place to live and raise a family. My pledge is to continue to be your voice and advocate in the State Legislature.*

*Deb Cherry*

## Michigan Legislature Completes Work on FY 2007 Budget

**T**he Michigan Legislature has finished its work on the FY 2007 budget, and the budget bills have been sent to Governor Granholm for her signature. A few items of interest to families include an increase to K-12 schools of \$210 per pupil and an increase for all of Michigan's public

colleges. As a member of the Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee, I fought hard to ensure that the University of Michigan-Flint received just over \$21.5 million



more than last year and that additional funding will be dedicated to helping relieve the chronic nursing shortage taking place in Michigan.

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### How To Contact Me

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# New and Tougher High School Graduation Requirements

In Michigan, high school graduation requirements are going to be tougher than before. Governor Jennifer Granholm signed historic bipartisan legislation, earlier this spring, making Michigan’s high school graduation requirements among the most rigorous in the nation, beginning with the graduating class of 2011.

Proposed Michigan Merit Core Curriculum	
English Language Arts: 4 Credits	Credits to include: English 9, English 10, English 11, English 12 (or Humanities sequence or Career and Technical Education (CTE) sequence). These credits will include writing, expository writing, creative writing, grammar, informational text, speaking, representing, reading, listening, viewing, literature, culture, and language.
Mathematics: 4 Credits	Credits to include: Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, one additional Math or Math-related credit (for example: Calculus, Trigonometry, Electronics, Accounting, Probability and Statistics or Integrated Math sequence or CTE sequence). Math must be taken in the senior year.
Science: 3 Credits	Credits to include: Biology, Physics or Chemistry, one additional Science credit (for example: Earth Science, Environmental Science, Forensic Science, Microbiology, Nanoscience, Oceanography, AP/IB/College for credit Sciences, Health Sciences, Agriscience, Chemistry, Physics or Integrated Science sequence or CTE sequence).
Social Science: 3 Credits	Credits to include: Government/Civics .5 (semester), Economics .5 (semester), U.S. History (integrated with Geography), World History (integrated with Geography) or Humanities sequence or CTE sequence.
Health/Physical Education: 1 Credit	Examples: Health, Personal Fitness.
Visual and Performing Arts: 1 Credit	Examples: Vocal and Instrumental Music, Art, Music Appreciation, Art History, Multicultural Art, Readers’ Theater, and Dance.
World Languages: 2 Credits	
SUBTOTAL	18 Credits

## Corporate Responsibility

Unfair federal trade policies and state tax incentives that promote the outsourcing of Michigan jobs continue to hurt working families, but Governor Granholm and Democratic legislators are once again presenting innovative plans to protect Michigan jobs and workers. In July, Gov. Granholm and I, along with Senate and House lawmakers, announced legislation to create the Michigan Corporate Responsibility Act. It would prohibit state support of companies that fail to meet job creation, pension, and international workers’ rights standards.

If the Corporate Responsibility Act becomes law, economic development benefits, including tax credits, abatements, loans, and grants, would not be available to companies that are

found to participate in any of the following activities:

- The company, or any of its officers have been convicted in the past 15 years of a criminal offense related to performance of a previous state contract or involving business integrity, including embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, and others;
- The company uses economic development funds to outsource jobs;
- The business has incorporated in a tax haven country since September 11, 2001;
- The business fails to comply with international workers’ rights standards or U.S. pension laws.

The Act would also require the Department of Management and Budget to consider all of the above standards in addition to cost and economic impact to the state when contracting for products and services.

There are many good businesses here in Michigan that strive to be good corporate citizens. Unfortunately, there are other companies who incorporate off-shore to avoid paying taxes or violate U.S. pension laws and international labor standards. But, we shouldn’t have to pay for it with our tax dollars. If this legislative package is passed, Michigan citizens’ dollars will be used to create jobs here and build our economy.

# Senator Cherry Introduces Legislation to Expand the New Merit Scholarship

In June, I introduced legislation, Senate Bill 1335, that would help make it possible for all of Michigan students to continue their education beyond high school. The New Merit Award, first proposed by Gov. Jennifer Granholm in her 2006 State of the State address, would make \$4,000 available to every student who wants to earn a 2-year college degree or technical certification. This

legislation is a result of



bipartisan discussions in the Michigan Senate, of which I was a participant.

Features of the Governor's New Merit proposal are:

- Beginning with the high school class of 2007, students can use the \$4,000 scholarship to attend any college or university in Michigan, public or private, and a wide array of technical training programs.
- Students who do well on the high school assessment can earn half of their \$4,000 scholarship during their freshman and sophomore years and earn the remaining \$2,000 by successfully completing those two years of post-secondary education and earning an associate's degree, junior status at a 4-year institution, or technical certification.

- Students who do not receive a qualifying score on the assessment test can earn their entire \$4,000 scholarship by successfully completing two years of post-secondary education. They will be able to demonstrate their "merit" by earning the post-secondary credentials that employers demand.

I believe this program will ensure that all of Michigan's students can get at least 2 years of education after high school, which will give them the opportunity to be prepared to compete in the job market of the 21st century.

## Minimum Wage

A few months ago, my Democratic colleagues and I helped pass legislation that was eventually signed into law by Governor Granholm. The legislation increases the minimum wage for the first time in nearly a decade. The state minimum wage will increase to \$6.95 on October 1, 2006. It will increase again on July 1, 2007 to \$7.15 and, on July 1, 2008, to \$7.40.

This will provide a much-needed boost to local economies as minimum wage earners will likely buy more goods and services from area businesses. It will also help put more money in the pockets of working people as energy costs and gas prices continue to rise.

## Cell Phone Consumer Rights

In June, Senate Democrats, including me, introduced legislation to give consumers increased protection in their dealings with cell phone providers. The comprehensive package, which is called "The Cell Phone Bill of Rights," calls for quality of service standards, requires companies to provide accurate coverage maps, and increases oversight of marketing and billing practices.

The legislation also requires clear identification of package minute usage, good faith

estimates of monthly service, and legible and unambiguous contract language. In addition, customers would have a 20-day grace period to cancel contracts and would receive full refunds.

The maximum a wireless provider could charge for early contract termination is \$20.

Providers would also be required to notify subscribers 30 days prior to contract expiration.





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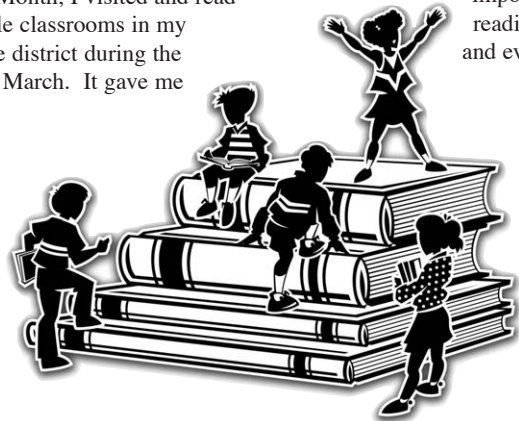


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## Senator Cherry Reads With Local School Children During March is Reading Month

**R**ecognizing that reading is a vital aspect of a child's education and development, and in recognition of March is Reading Month, I visited and read to multiple classrooms in my legislative district during the month of March. It gave me

great pleasure to meet the faculty of these schools and to spend time with the young people of my district to share with them the importance of reading each and every day.



## Senator Cherry is Honored to Receive Awards

**I**n April, Fight Crime: Invest in Kids Michigan, which is a statewide crime prevention organization, honored me with the *Crime Fighter Award* at a breakfast meeting in Burton. The award stemmed from my advocacy for investing in children at an early age, including support for programs and funding of after-school programs, child abuse and neglect prevention programs, and quality preschool programs. Early intervention has a proven track record of crime deterrence.



In June, the Alzheimer's Association Greater Michigan Chapter, presented me with an advocacy award during their 25th Anniversary Annual Meeting and Awards Program in Livonia. It was an honor to receive the award from an organization with such a long history of commitment to caring for those who suffer from Alzheimer's. I will continue my advocacy on behalf of this organization as they seek cures for this debilitating disease.

## E-Mail Newsletter Available

**I** am currently sending out periodic e-mail newsletters to keep you informed about what's going on in Lansing, as well as other important information from around the state. If you would like to receive this newsletter, please send your e-mail address to:

**sendcherry@senate.  
michigan.gov**

and I'll be sure to add you to our mailing list. Please also visit my State Senate website,

**[www.senate.mi.gov/cherry](http://www.senate.mi.gov/cherry),**  
which will keep you up to date on my activities in Lansing as well as in the district.